

## Activity #11: Strategies for Social Awareness

### Section 5: Social Awareness

#### GROUP 1: Strategies Involving the Physical Setup of Your Classroom

- Post charts on which children can indicate their feelings or preferences (e.g., putting their picture in the column below the picture of their favorite animal)
- Post charts showing different feelings

*Directions: Make a chart you could post in your classroom for children to indicate their feelings.*

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#### GROUP 2: Strategies Involving Materials in Your Classroom

- Include materials that foster pretend and fantasy play
- Rotate the theme and materials of the Pretend and Learn Center to represent different community settings such as a home, grocery store, post office, veterinary clinic, car mechanic shop, etc; this helps children become more aware of various social roles and processes, and stimulates social communication

*Directions: Make a list of materials you could put in your dramatic play center to foster pretend and fantasy play. Consider using a specific theme from your curriculum instead of random materials.*

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#### GROUP 3: Strategies to Use with Groups of Children

- Brainstorm and use words that can be used to describe others' characteristics
- Have children draw pictures of themselves and others; direct them to add specific or additional characteristics
- Teach words for different feelings
- Label your own and others' feelings

- Teach ways to determine others' feelings (e.g., facial cues, body language, tone of voice); practice using role-playing and feeling charts, cards, masks, cubes, etc.
- Discuss read alouds: Have children talk about characters' feelings and preferences and points of view, compare them to other characters and to themselves, and put themselves in the shoes of the character
- Incorporate respect for diversity into activities and read alouds
- Take votes or surveys to determine children's likes and dislikes; count votes and turn data into simple graphs for posting
- Give children concrete experiences with different perspectives (e.g., looking at an object from different positions)
- Remind children to show interest and respect for their classmates by looking and listening when someone else is speaking
- Point out to children how their behavior is affecting others, (e.g., "Olivia, when you are talking while it's Shawn's turn to talk, your friends can't hear Shawn's important words. When it's *your* turn to talk, your friends will listen to *your* important words.")
- To encourage children to pay attention to each other, take turns asking children to tell what another child just said

*Directions: Decide on some "feelings" words you could teach to the children in your classroom. Write some child-friendly definitions for these words.*

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#### **GROUP 4: Strategies to Use with Individual Children**

- Acknowledge, describe, and accept a child's different perspective
- During class discussion times, have children sit in a circle so they can see each other's faces
- For a child who has difficulty paying attention to others, seat that child near you and cue him as needed, in a quiet voice in his ear, to look and listen to whomever is speaking
- For a child who does not notice others' reactions, cue her to look at her classmate's face or listen to her words, and help point out how the classmate is responding to the child's behavior

*Directions: Develop a role-play you could do with the children in your classroom to teach them how to notice others' feelings and respond appropriately to others' behavior.*